

Introduction

Pupil transportation plays an important role in the educational process. Transporting children to and from school each day is a responsibility that requires good physical health, professionalism, emotional stamina, determination, dedication, and skill. The main objective of any pupil transportation system is to transport passengers to and from school each day safely and efficiently. To achieve this goal, driver trainees must be instructed thoroughly in the fundamentals and techniques of operating school buses. The success of the program depends upon their motivation, dedication, and skill.

The contents of this training curriculum guide are a compilation of the "School Bus Instructional Program" of the Department of Transportation, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "National School Transportation Specifications and Procedures," and driver training materials from school divisions in Virginia.

After completing this program, applicants for positions as school bus drivers should be able to operate a school bus safely and efficiently. Drivers of school buses should always keep in mind that they are responsible for transporting children whose lives depend upon their knowledge, alertness, and sound judgment.

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Code of Virginia

§ 22.1-177. Regulations.

The Board may make regulations relating to the construction, design, operation, equipment, and color of public school buses and shall have the authority to issue an order prohibiting the operation on public streets and highways of any public school bus which does not comply with such regulations. Any such order shall be enforced by the Department of State Police.

Local school boards may, notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, display decals depicting the flag of the United States on the sides and rear of school buses as long as any such decal does not obstruct the name of the school division or the number of the school bus and is no larger than 100 square inches. In addition, local school boards may, notwithstanding any regulation to the contrary, display decals relating to local school division bus safety hotlines.

Local school divisions shall be responsible for the cost of the decals bearing the number of such safety hotline. Such decal shall not obstruct the name of the school division or the number of the school bus.

No regulation of the Board shall unreasonably limit the authority of any local school division to purchase and use school buses using compressed natural gas or other alternative fuels or convert its school buses to use compressed natural gas or other alternative fuels.

§ 22.1-178. Requirements for persons employed to drive school buses.

A. No school board shall hire, employ, or enter into any agreement with any person for the purposes of operating a school bus transporting pupils unless the person proposed to so operate such school bus shall:

1. Have a physical examination of a scope prescribed by the Board of Education with the advice of the Medical Society of Virginia and furnish a form prescribed by the Board of Education showing the results of such examination.
2. Furnish a statement or copy of records from the Department of Motor Vehicles showing that the records of such Department do not disclose that the person, within the preceding five years, has been convicted upon a charge of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, convicted of a felony or assigned to any alcohol safety action program or driver alcohol rehabilitation program pursuant to § 18.2-271.1 or, within the preceding twelve months, has been convicted of two or more moving traffic violations or required to attend a driver improvement clinic by the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles pursuant to § 46.2-498.
3. Furnish a statement signed by two reputable persons who reside in the school division or in the applicant's community that the person is of good moral character.
4. Exhibit a license showing the person has successfully undertaken the examination prescribed by § 46.2-339.
5. Have reached the age of eighteen on the first day of the school year.

B. Any school board may require successful completion of the American National Red Cross first-aid course or its equivalent as a condition to employment to operate a school bus transporting pupils.

C. School boards may require persons accepting employment after July 1, 1994, as a driver of a school bus transporting pupils to agree, as a condition of employment, to submit to alcohol and controlled substance testing. Any such tests shall be conducted in compliance with Board of Education regulations.

D. The documents required pursuant to subdivisions A 1 and A 2 of this unit shall be furnished annually prior to the anniversary date of the employment agreement as a condition to continuing employment to operate a school bus.

E. The documents required pursuant to this unit shall be filed with, and made a part of, the records of the school board employing such person as a school bus operator.

F. The State Department of Education shall furnish to the several division superintendents the necessary forms to be used by applicants in furnishing the information required by this unit. Insofar as practicable, such forms shall be designed to limit paperwork, avoid the possibility of mistake, and furnish all parties involved with a complete and accurate record of the information required.

G. The physical examination required by subunit A may be performed and the report of the results signed by a licensed nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

§ 22.1-181. Training program for school bus operators.

The Board of Education shall develop a training program for persons applying for employment, and employed, to operate school buses and shall promote its implementation.

§ 46.2-100. Definitions.

"School bus" means any motor vehicle, other than a station wagon, automobile, truck, or commercial bus, which is: (i) designed and used primarily for the transportation of pupils to and from public, private or religious schools, or used for the transportation of the mentally or physically handicapped to and from a sheltered workshop; (ii) painted yellow and bears the words "School Bus" in black letters of a specified size on front and rear; and (iii) is equipped with warning devices prescribed in § 46.2-1090. A yellow school bus may have a white roof provided such vehicle is painted in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Department of Education.

§ 46.2-340. Information concerning school bus drivers and driver education instructors.

A. At the beginning of each school year, and whenever changes need to be made, each local school division shall furnish to the Department of Motor Vehicles the name, driver's license number, and commercial driver's license number of all persons driving school buses for that school division. Whenever any commercial driver's license with a school bus driver's endorsement is suspended or revoked, or the holder of a driver's license with a school bus driver's endorsement or commercial driver's license with a school bus driver's endorsement is convicted in any court of reckless driving or driving while intoxicated, the Department shall notify the affected local school division of the name and driver's license number or commercial driver's license number of the driver involved.

B. At the beginning of each school year, and whenever changes need to be made, each local school division and private school providing a driver education program approved by the Department of Education shall furnish to the Department of Motor Vehicles the name and driver's license number of all persons providing instruction in driver education for that school division or private school. Whenever a driver's license of a person providing such instruction is suspended or revoked, or such person is convicted in any court of reckless driving or driving while intoxicated, the Department shall notify the affected local school division or private school of the name and driver's license number of the driver involved.

If the driving record of such driver education instructor accumulates more than six demerit points based on convictions occurring in any calendar year, the Department shall notify the relevant

local school division or private school of the name and driver's license number of the driver. Safe driving points shall not be used to reduce the six demerit points. No driver education program in a public school division or a private school shall retain its approval by the Department of Education unless such a person who has accumulated such six demerit points is removed from providing behind-the-wheel driver education instruction in the private school or public school division for a period of twenty-four months.

C. The provisions of the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Chapter 38 of Title 2.2, § 2.2-3800 et seq.) shall not apply to the exchange of information under this unit.

Virginia Administrative Code

8VAC20-70-350. Training.

No person shall operate a school or activity bus transporting pupils unless the person has:

1. Received classroom, demonstration, and behind-the-wheel instruction in accordance with a program developed by the Department of Education pursuant to §22.1-181 of the Code of Virginia.
2. Completed a minimum of 24 classroom hours and 24 hours of behind-the-wheel training. A minimum of 10 of the 24 hours of behind-the-wheel time shall involve the operation of a bus with pupils on board while under the direct supervision of a designated bus driver trainer. All drivers shall receive training in the operation of a Type D bus and transportation of students with special needs.

The superintendent or his designee shall maintain a record showing that the applicant has completed the training and has been approved to operate a school or activity bus.

8VAC20-70-420. Instructor course certificate.

Local school bus driver training instructors shall hold a certificate for completion of an instructor course conducted or approved by the Department of Education and shall attend a recertification course every five years.

Introduction

The purpose of this curriculum guide is to provide information about the skills and knowledge that are needed to operate school buses safely, efficiently, economically, and legally.

The pre-service information is divided into eight units. These units are considered to be the minimum amount of instruction needed by new drivers before they are permitted to transport passengers and should be taught in the prescribed sequence.

1. These units can be divided into three or four days, depending upon the experience, number of trainees in the class, and the number of hours trained per day.
2. The recommended time frame for each unit is as follows:
 - a. Driver's Role and Responsibility
Two-Three hours
 - b. Passenger Conduct
Two-Three hours
 - c. Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Responsibilities
Three-Four hours
 - d. Driving Fundamentals
Four-Five hours
 - e. Loading and Unloading Passengers
Three-Four hours
 - f. Accidents and Emergencies
Two-Three hours
 - g. Detecting Hazards
Two-Three hours
 - h. Transit Buses
Two-Three hours

Planning Considerations

1. Administration and Supervision

The success of any school bus driver training program depends upon administrative leadership, qualified and dedicated trainers, appropriate equipment, facilities and competent supervision. Quality programs of instruction do not happen by chance. They are the product of continuous, careful, and cooperative planning by those involved in the program. The most successful programs are those actively supported by administrators who have taken a direct interest in their development.

Administration and supervision are important to the effectiveness of the school bus driver training program. The nature and scope of a comprehensive program involves a large number of administrative responsibilities and decisions. The program should be based on carefully planned policies and sound educational principles to incorporate effective training schedules.

Some administrative responsibilities may include the following:

- Selecting, training, and evaluating trainees;
- Monitoring program;
- Keeping accurate records and reports;
- Staff development through in-service programs; and,
- Establishing a good working relationship with local and state agencies that have traffic safety responsibilities.

Administrators and supervisors need to give attention to the development of policies affecting all aspects of the school bus driver training programs, and the formulation of practical methods of carrying out such policies. For maximum effectiveness, policies should be formulated and adopted in written form by school personnel. Administrators and instructors may then establish procedures that will provide a sound basis from which to make consistent decisions.

A qualified staff person should supervise and assist in administering the school bus driver training program. This person will be given authority and time to act effectively on matters for which he/she is responsible.

The duties of the driver trainer should include the following:

- Assisting in formulating general policies and practices
- Evaluating and improving instruction
- Selecting and evaluating materials and equipment
- Assisting in scheduling
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the instructional programs
- Carrying on an effective public relations program
- Route planning for behind-the-wheel
- Assist in conducting in-service programs

Class Size

The curriculum was developed to encourage maximum participation by each driver trainer. The more a trainee participates by asking and answering questions and taking notes, the better equipped he or she will be to retain the material being taught. All trainees should bring pencils, pens, and paper for classroom instruction.

The class size should be limited to 15 to 20 persons. With groups larger than 20, participation may be limited; therefore, the recommendation affords each student the opportunity for adequate participation.

Equipment Needs (optional)

Chalkboard	Extension cords
Magnetic board	TV/VCR
Chalk	Laptop computer
Eraser	Cart/projection stands
Filmstrip projector	Screen
Overhead projector	

Classroom Needs

Good lighting	Near restroom facilities
Good ventilation	Adequate classroom space for the number of trainees
Good acoustics	Adequate temperature control
Adequate workspace	
Sufficient number of outlets	

Student Requirements

1. Valid driver's license
2. Commercial driver's license (CDL) instruction permit

Instructor Requirements

1. Has completed the Virginia Department of Education's training before teaching;
2. Holds a valid Virginia CDL with all endorsements to operate school buses;
3. Has experience as a school bus driver and/or supervisor;
4. Has a safe driving record as reported on the DMV transcript;
5. Has participated in the preparation and adaptation of curriculum materials.

Adapting the Units to Satisfy Local Needs

The instructor and/or supervisor of transportation should localize the units. Following is a suggested outline for achieving this objective.

- A. Read the entire unit;
- B. Select your local policy and insert it where appropriate;
- C. Develop local media, if appropriate;
- D. Contact resource personnel, if applicable;
- E. Note which audiovisual equipment and/or resources to use.

Lesson Review

A unit review is included. These can be used as a pretest and post-test exercise or as a post-test exercise only. It is important for the trainees to understand that these units are for review, not testing. Once the review is completed, each question should be discussed to ensure the trainees understand the unit or to field any questions.

Conducting the Program

The success of this program depends on attitude, dedication, and motivation of the trainees. They should be aware of the impact their actions and attitudes will have.

They should create and promote an exciting and productive environment in the classroom. Consider the following when conducting the program.

1. Read over all of the materials before teaching
2. Localize the training guide and prepare notes before teaching the content
3. Follow the topic and time schedule decided upon
4. Have all trainees complete the review exercises at the end of each unit
5. Encourage discussion by acknowledging and positively promoting students' attempts at discussion
6. Give students as much individual attention as possible

Teaching Points

Teaching prospective bus drivers how to drive a bus is a tremendous responsibility. When teaching prospective drivers, remember the following:

- Be prepared
- Be extremely organized
- Use good eye contact
- Be respectful
- If you don't know the answer, admit it
- Don't stand behind podium
- Stand and be active (do not sit)
- Don't lecture too much
- Structure your lessons with a variety of activities
- Ask questions
- Involve others
- Demonstrate/explain
- Speak in the appropriate language
- Dress appropriately
- Show pride and enthusiasm
- Use good illustrations and visual aids
- Be prompt

Learning Objectives

Unit A: Driver's Role and Responsibilities:

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. state the importance of the school bus driver
2. describe the responsibilities of a school bus driver
3. state the requirements of a Virginia school bus driver

Unit B: Passenger Conduct

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. describe the importance of good student conduct
2. identify local policies regarding discipline and documentation
3. identify risk situations for drivers
4. promote and maintain "good behavior" on the school bus

Unit C: Pre-trip Responsibilities

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. inspect school bus warning devices
2. describe and identify school bus mechanical devices
3. identify defects
4. inspect interior and exterior items

Unit D: Driving Fundamentals

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. compare and contrast size and dimensions of various school bus
2. operate a bus using proper driving techniques
3. understand Virginia traffic laws regarding pupil transportation
4. identify potential dangers when operating a bus

Unit E: Loading and Unloading

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. state and perform proper loading and unloading processes
2. describe student procedures during the loading and unloading process
3. identify the "Danger Zone"
4. understand laws related to loading and unloading
5. describe and perform a post trip inspection

Learning Objectives

Unit F: Accidents and Emergencies

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. identify contributing factors related to accidents
2. describe and perform proper post accident procedures
3. describe and perform evacuation procedure during an accident

Unit G: Detecting Hazards

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. describe and perform various techniques in detecting hazards
2. describe and perform observation techniques
3. perform and respond to emergencies caused by road hazards

Unit H: Transit Buses

After completing this unit the student will be able to:

1. compare and contrast the dimensions of a transit school bus
2. identify the differences of the transit school bus vs. conventional
3. define and describe the characteristic and handling of transit school buses
4. identify the potential dangers when operating a transit school bus

Table of Contents

Unit - A

Driver's Role and Responsibilities

- I. Introduction
- II. Driver Requirements
- III. Responsibilities of the School Bus Driver
- IV. Communications

Unit - B

Passenger Conduct

- I. Promoting Good Conduct
- II. Steps for good management
- III. Rules for student conduct
- IV. Student behavior related to safety
- V. Discipline problems and reporting procedures
- VI. Passenger Seating

Unit - C

Pre-Trip Responsibilities

- I. Introduction
- II. Bus Components and Systems
- III. What is Preventive Maintenance?
- IV. Operation of the Bus

Unit - D

Driving Fundamentals

- I. Introduction – Successful Driving
- II. Definitions of School Buses by Type
- III. Dimensions of School Buses by Type
- IV. Starting the Bus
- V. Starting Out and Accelerating
- VI. Relative Shift Speeds
- VII. Stopping a Bus with a Manual Transmission
- VIII. Steering
- IX. Turning
- X. Backing
- XI. Turnarounds
- XII. Parking the Bus
- XIII. Starting and Stopping on a Hill with a Manual Transmission
- XIV. Position on the Roadway
- XV. Entering the Flow of Traffic
- XVI. Intersections

- XVII. Following another Vehicle
- XVIII. Passing
- XIX. Being Overtaken and Passed
- XX. Railroad Crossings
- XXI. Speed Limits for School Buses
- XXII. Driving on School Grounds
- XXIII. Driving Under Special Conditions
- XXIV. Expressway Driving
- XXV. Activity Trips

Unit - E

Loading and Unloading Passengers

- I. Use of traffic warning devices
- II. Location of the Stop
- III. Loading
- IV. Unloading
- V. Loading and unloading when emergency vehicle approaches
- VI. Post Trip Inspection
- VII. The Dangers of Loading and Unloading

Unit - F

Accidents and Emergencies

- I. Accident Factors
- II. Potential Accident Situations
- III. Accident Procedures
- IV. Driver Negligence
- V. Post-Accident Procedures
- VI. Mechanical Breakdown – General Procedures
- VII. Emergency Equipment
- VIII. Bus Evacuation
- IX. Evacuation procedures

Unit - G

Detecting Hazards

- I. Introduction
- II. Techniques for Detecting Hazards
- III. General Perceptual Considerations
- IV. On-Road Hazards
- V. Off-Road Hazards
- VI. Single Vehicle Hazards
- VII. Multiple Vehicle Hazards
- VIII. Road User Hazards
- IX. Combination Hazards – Roadway/Vehicle
- X. Skidding
- XI. Tire Blowout
- XII. Brake Loss or Failure

- XIII. Obstruction in the Path of the Bus
- XIV. Run off the Road
- XV. Other Emergencies
- XVI. Driving Under Adverse Weather and Road

Unit - H

Transit Buses

- I. Introduction
- II. Dimensions
- III. Adjustment/Use of Mirrors
- IV. Steering position
- V. Stopping
- VI. Turns
- VII. Backing
- VIII. Lane Positioning
- IX. Space Cushion
- X. Caution Notes

Unit - I

Behind the Wheel

- I. Introduction
- II. Virginia School Bus Driver Training
- III. Planning Considerations
- IV. Evaluation
- V. Defensive Driving
- VI. Commentary Driving
- VII. Getting Acquainted with the School Bus
- VIII. Observing Instructor Prepare for and Perform Daily Trip
- IX. Discussion of Daily Trip
- X. Summary

Unit – J

Forms and Resources

Unit – K

Essay Questions and Answers

Special Needs Units

- I. The Challenge of Transporting Children with Special Needs
- II. Characteristics of Children with Special Needs
- III. Legal Aspects of Transporting Children with Special Needs
- IV. Communication is Critical for Special Needs Bus Drivers
- V. Behavior Management Strategies for Children with Special Needs
- VI. Safe Loading and Transportation of Children Using Adaptive Equipment
- VII. Special Preparation for Emergencies
- VIII. Unique Responsibilities of Drivers of Special Children